

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00
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PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 AID-05 EB-08
TRSE-00 OMB-01 /129 W
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R 180630Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8556
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USINT HAVANA
UCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ALGIERS 1538

CINCEUR FOR POLAD; PARIS ALSO PASS AMBASSADOR HAYNES

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, NATO, XA, SS, MO, MR, TS, LY, FR, UR, CU, AG, US
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S TOURS D'HORIZON WITH SENIOR GOA OFFICIALS,
PART III

REFS: A) ALGIERS 1526(NOTLA), B) ALGIERS 1528(NOTAL) C) STATE 022330
(NOTAL), D) ALGIERS 06600(NOTOAL)

1. SUMMARY. IN LAST OF MEETINGS HELD WITH SENIOR GOA OFFICIALS IN
PREPARATION FOR DEPARTURE ON CONSULTATIONS, AMBASSADOR OBTAINED
VIEWS OF SECYGEN OF GOVERNMENT ON GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF ALGERIAN-
AMERICAN RELATIONS, SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA,
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RUMORS OF MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN CONTACTS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION
IN ALGERIA. SECYGEN REQUESTED FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF U.S. POSI-
TION ON FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SAHARA. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAY 16 I MADE THE LAST OF MY PRE-CONSULTATION CALLS IN ALGIERS,
MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE GOVERNMENT, SMAIL HAMDANI.
AS WAS THE CASE WITH PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR SLIMANE HOFFMAN (SEE

REFTEL A), HAMDANI WAS QUITE OPEN AND FORTHCOMING IN HIS COMMENTS TO ME ON A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS.

3. U.S. PARTNERSHIP WITH ALGERIA. HAMDANI URGED THE USG TO ASSESS ITS "PARTNERSHIP WITH ALGERIA" IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COLD REALITIES OF THE RELATIVE POLITICAL STABILITY OF THE MAGHREB NATIONS. TUNISIA CANNOT BE CONSIDERED POLITICALLY STABLE BECAUSE A REGIME HAS EFFECTIVELY COME TO AN END THERE WITH NO INDICATION YET OF WHAT IS TO FOLLOW. POLITICAL STABILITY IN MOROCCO IS NOT ASSURED, BECAUSE "EVERYONE KNOWS THAT ABSOLUTE MONARCHY HAS A LIMITED LEASE ON LIFE IN THE MODERN WORLD AND, FURTHERMORE, HASSAN II HAS CANCER". AS FOR LIBYA, "NO ONE KNOWS BETTER THAN WE ALGERIANS THAT QADHAFI IS UNPREDICTABLE AND UNRELIABLE". BY THOSE STANDARDS, HE SAID, ALGERIA ENJOYS THE MOST STABLE REGIME AND SHOULD BE CONSIDERED THE MAIN STABILIZING FORCE FOR THE MAGHREB.

4. U.S. POSITION ON FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SAHARA. HAMDANI ECHOED HIS COLLEAGUES' VIEWS (REF REFTELS) ON FRENCH INTERVENTION IN THE SAHARA AND NATO INVOLVEMENT IN THE MOST RECENT JAGUAR ATTACKS. AS DID THE OTHERS, HE APPEALED FOR A CLARIFICATION OF THE U.S. POSITION ON FRENCH INTERVENTION. REPEATING THE ORAL COMMENTS I MADE WHEN I DELIVERED THE SECRETARY'S LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTEFLIKA (REFTEL C), I TOLD HAMDANI THAT THE USG WAS NOT SURPRISED BY THE FRENCH INTERVENTION TO PROTECT ITS NATIONALS. HE SAID THAT GOA WAS MORE CONCERNED TO UNDERSTAND WHETHER THE LACK OF USG SURPRISE IMPLIED SUPPORT, CONDONING, OR DISAPPROVAL OF THE FRENCH ACTION. CONFIDENTIAL

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5. RUMORS OF "CONTACTS" ON NEGOTIATIONS TO SETTLE SAHARA CONFLICT. WHEN PRESSED ON WHETHER CONTACTS BETWEEN ALGERIA/MOROCCO AND ALGERIA/MAURITANIA WERE IN FACT TAKING PLACE OR HAD IN FACT TAKEN PLACE, HAMDANI CATEGORICALLY DENIED THEIR EXISTENCE. HE CLAIMED THE RUMORS HAD BEEN STARTED BY THE MOROCCANS TO UNDERMINE AND PLACE IN DOUBT THE GOA'S CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE POLISARIO. IN ANY CASE, HE SAID, NO SUCH CONTACTS INVOLVING THE GOA ARE EVEN CONCEIVABLE WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE POLISARIO/RASD.

6. SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA. WHEN ASKED FOR HIS VIEWS ON THE SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA, HAMDANI LINKED IT TO FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTION, SAYING "THE FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE SAHARA JUSTIFIES THE SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE, AND THAT IS THE MAIN REASON WHY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT REMAINS AS SILENT ON THAT INTERVENTION AS DOES THE USG". (LIKE HOFFMAN IN REFTEL A, HAMDANI MADE NO EFFORT TO DENY THE CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE ON THE CONTINENT.)

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ALGIERS 1538

CINCEUR FOR POLAD; PARIS ALSO PASS AMBASSADOR HAYNES

7. FOREIGN AID BILL. HAMDANI HAD JUST HEARD THE NEWS THAT THE HOUSE HAD PASSED A THREE BILLION DOLLAR FOREIGN AID BILL SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDING UGANDA, CAMBODIA, VIET NAM AND CUBA FROM RECEIVING SUCH AID BECAUSE OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. HE QUESTIONED THE STANDARDS ON WHICH SUCH EXCLUSIONS WERE MADE, FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY SOUTH AFRICA, IRAN, MOROCCO, BRAZIL, SAUDI ARABIA AND MANY OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS "VIOLATORS" WERE NOT SIMILARLY EXCLUDED.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS IN ALGERIA. I TOLD HAMDANI THAT THE ACTION OF THE HOUSE WAS A GENUINE REFLECTION OF THE CONCERN OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD. FOCUSSED ON
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ALGERIA (SEE REFTTEL D), I MENTIONED THAT IT WAS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT GROUPS IN THE U.S. CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RIGHTS COULD CONSIDER ALGERIA IN VIOLATION FOR (A) ITS CONTINUED BLOCKING OF UNHCR ACCESS

AND AID TO THE SAHRAOUI REFUGEES IN TINDOUF AND (B) THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF FORMER PRESIDENT AHMED BEN BELLA WITHOUT TRIAL. WITH RESPECT TO THE SAHRAOUI REFUGEES, HAMDANI REPLIED THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS "VIOLATORS" WERE MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA, WHICH CAUSED THE SAHRAOUI TO FLEE THEIR HOMELAND, AND OT ALGERIA. WITH RESPECT TO BEN BELLA, HE CLAIMED THE FORMER PRESIDENT IS "MERELY RESTRICTED TO HIS OWN HOME FOR REASONS OF NATIONAL SECURITY".

9. ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDY IN NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN. IN PASSING, HAMDANI MENTIONED THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, OF WHICH HE IS SECRETARY-GENERAL, HAS BEEN MEETING FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS TO DEVELOP A NEW NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN. HOWEVER, IT HAS ALREADY BEEN DECIDED THAT SPECIAL EMPHASIS WILL BE PLACED ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDY BECAUSE THE GOA RECOGNIZES THAT ENGLISH HAS BECOME THE LANGUAGE OF ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RELATIONS.

10. COMMENT. HAMDANI IS PLAYING TO OUR CONCERN FOR REGIONAL STABILITY AND MINIMIZING HIS OWN COUNTRY'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS WHEN HE DESCRIBES ALGERIA AS THE MAIN STABILIZING FORCE FOR THE MAGHREB, BUT HIS COMMENT DOES HIGHLIGHT THE GOA'S FEELING THAT ALGERIA'S ECONOMIC POWER GIVES IT A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE MAGHREB, AS WELL AS THE GOA'S FEAR THAT WE MIGHT NOT GIVE WHAT HE RATHER STRIKINGLY CALLS OUR "PARTNERSHIP WITH ALGERIA" ITS DUE. HIS REQUEST FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF THE U.S. POSITION ON FRENCH ACTION IN THE SAHARA AND HIS REITERATION OF ALLEGATIONS OF NATO INVOLVEMENT IN THE MOST RECENT JAGUAR ATTACKS PROVIDE FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE GOA'S DEEP ANXIETY OVER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SAHARA AND FURTHER JUSTIFICATION FOR MY RECOMMENDATION THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDE US WITH GUIDANCE ON THE LLEGATIONS OF NATO INVOLVEMENT. HIS DENIAL OF ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN CONTACTS ADDS OBSCURITY TO AN ALREADY CONFIDENTIAL

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DARK PICTURE. ON THE SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA, HAMDANI (LIKE MFA DIRECTOR FOR WESTERN EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS KHERBI IN REFTEL A) REFUSES TO GIVE US THE SATISFACTION OF HEARING THAT THE GOA IS BOTHERED, BUT, ON THE BASIS OF WHAT PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR HOFFMAN SAYS (ALSO REFTEL A), WE BELIEVE IT IS. ON THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, HAMDANI'S REACTION IS VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH WHAT THE EMBASSY PREDICTED WHEN A DEMARCHE ON THE SUBJECT WAS FIRST PROPOSED (SEE REFTEL D). HIS FAILURE TO USE THE OCCASION TO DIVULGE ANYTHING ABOUT BEN BELLA LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT THE EASING OF BEN BELLA'S DETENTION NEGOTIATED (ACCORDING TO HIS FAMILY) LAST YEAR HAS BEEN PUT ON THE BACK BURNER. HAYNES

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